



CONNECTICUT VETERANS & MILITARY COALITION

c/o Officers and Enlisted Club of Connecticut, 360 Broad St., Hartford, CT 06105

Good afternoon Senator Flexer, Senator Martin, Representative Hennessy and members of the Veterans Affairs Committee.

I am Dan Thurston, Chairman of the Connecticut Veterans and Military Coalition.

I am here today to speak on behalf of the Veterans and their families of this State with regard to several bills that are being considered in this Legislative year.

RB-229 – “An Act Concerning Members of the Armed Forces and civil Service Examinations”.

RB-232 – “An Act Concerning Spouses of Transferred Members of the Armed Forces”.

These bills address similar issues for members of our Armed Forces that are returning to civilian life or have been assigned here in the performance of their duties. Connecticut can and should become a leader in recognizing the training, knowledge and accreditations that service members and their families have gained while serving our nation.

A Service member returning to the civilian life who has served their country as a Medic or Corpsman is a prime example. Their training and field experience in my opinion is second to none. Many of them have made the difference between life and death for another human being. They have experienced events that we can only imagine. Yet their education level is ranked with a first year student entering the field of medicine.

These men and women, with reasonable transitional training, should be able to stand equal with civilians in their field. Members of the Armed Services have trained and worked as medics, educators, nurses and many other occupations competently and reliably. The only difference is that they have worked in different geographical location. Does that disqualify them to serve here in Connecticut?

It should be the goal of this body to insure that accreditations from a credible institution, including military schools, that have been earned by military personnel and their immediate families, be recognized by the State of Connecticut.

RB-228 – “An Act Concerning the Observance of Veterans’ Day”.

The Observance of Veterans Day has been an issue that I addressed in my testimony on February 5, 2016 before this committee. I would like to summarize that testimony to this.

There is mixed activity in schools around Veterans Day, ranging from a full school day dedicated to Veterans and other schools... doing nothing. The ceremonies that I have attended probably fall into two categories; a class room Q&A or a school assembly. Some schools do both and can include breakfast or lunch. The veteran attendance can range from a half dozen to 30 or more. They are scheduled on days leading up to and following Veterans Day with at least one school that holds their annual event on Veterans Day. The organizers of these events have other things in common, the strong support of their colleagues and the administration as well as enthusiastic participation from the students.

Another annual event is the Veterans Day Ceremony that takes place on the 11 hour of the 11 day of the 11 month in many of our communities. These ceremonies are organized mostly by the VSOs are usually conducted on the town green or at the community center.

Based on my experience and the feedback of my fellow veterans, I would ask that if the Veterans Affairs Committee were to consider changes to the current law, that they craft the legislation to allow the current programs to continue, not through a grandfather clause, but in such a way that would encourage other schools to adopt existing programs or create Veterans Day Programs built around the resources within their communities.

I do not believe that respect or appreciation can be legislated. It comes from the heart. The schools, organization and institutions that Honor Veterans Day and other patriotic holidays carry that in their daily lives through the year.



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On behalf of the Veterans of Connecticut and their families, I thank you for your time to allow me to express our views and for your commitment to the Veterans and Citizens of Connecticut. This concludes my testimony and I am available for any questions you may have.

Respectful Submitted,

Daniel C. Thurston

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